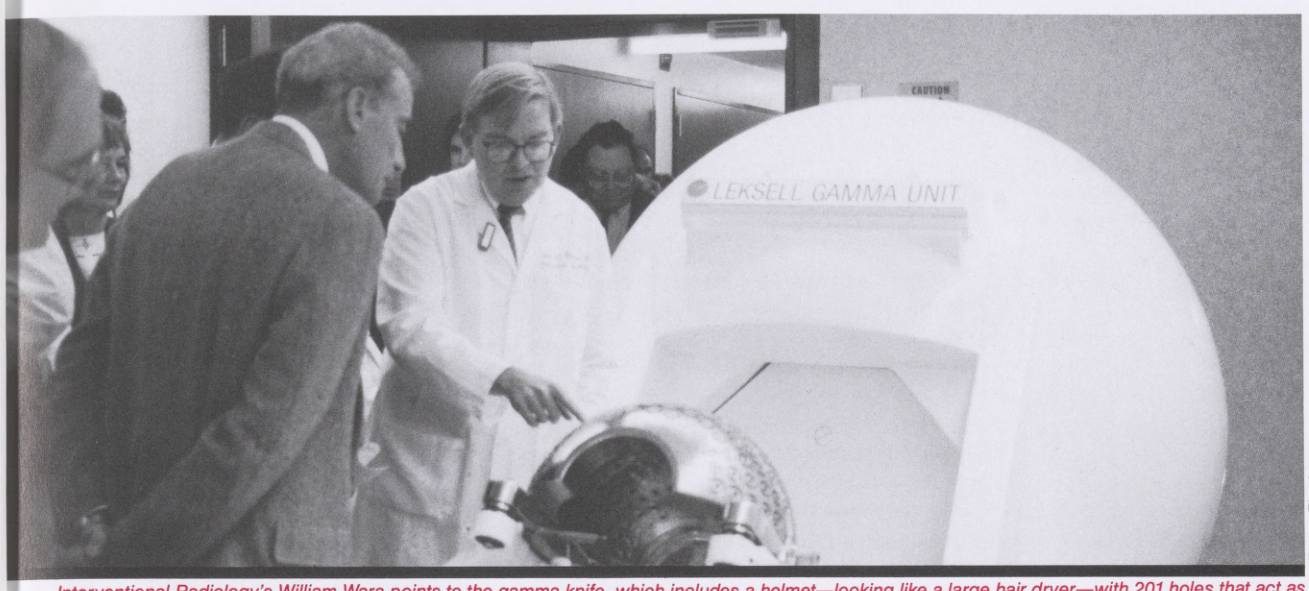
November/December 1991 Volume 16, Number 6

# News for You

A summary of recent news stories from the University of California, San Francisco

UCSF

## Gamma Knife Makes Brain Surgery Bloodless




Dawn Finch

*Interventional Radiology's William Wara points to the gamma knife, which includes a helmet—looking like a large hair dryer—with 201 holes that act as portals for radioactive cobalt.*

The UCSF Medical Center has a new high tech tool which makes brain surgery bloodless. It is called the "gamma knife" and is one of only eight in the US and two west of the Mississippi. It is a new weapon for patients with difficult-to-reach tumors and tangled blood vessels in the brain.

The knife works by way of gamma rays, fired with such pinpoint accuracy that only the diseased cells are destroyed and adjacent healthy tissue is left intact. Brain surgery in this manner is bloodless. No incision or opening of the skull is required, and patients leave the hospital usually a day after the procedure.

Each ray is harmless by itself, but when they converge at their target they become powerful enough to destroy diseased tissue. The surrounding healthy tissue is left undamaged, and the amount of radiation reaching the rest of the brain is miniscule and harmless.

Among the beneficiaries of the technology will be patients with small, malignant brain tumors that are difficult to reach. The gamma knife is able to penetrate areas too deep or too risky for the scalpel.

At UCSF, a large team, including neurosurgeons, radiation oncologists, interventional radiologists, medical physicists, nurses and technicians, will be involved in determining which patients are best suited for the gamma knife.

## Inhaling Cleansers Poisons 60,000 a Year

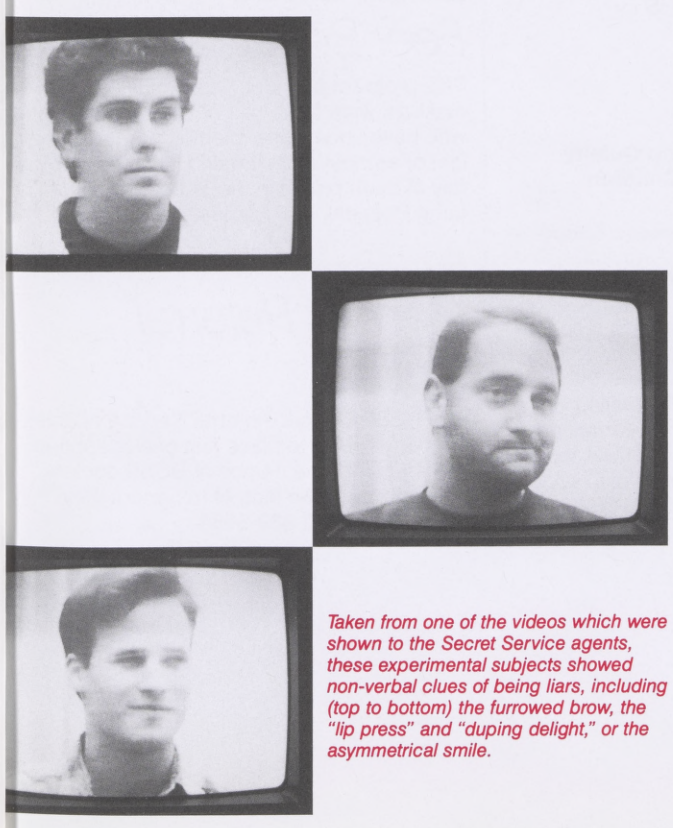
The fumes from household chlorine bleach and cleansers for most people constitute nothing more than an unpleasant smell. However, these fumes and other common irritants send about 60,000 people a year in this country to poison control centers.

"The most common single cause turns out to be the mixing of household cleansers—bleaches mixed with acids such as tile cleaners or bleaches mixed with ammonia," says UCSF's Paul Blanc, author of the study.

In order to answer questions on the frequency and nature of such breathing problems, Blanc and his colleagues in the Division of Occupational Medicine followed up on cases reported over a six-month period to the San Francisco Bay Area Regional Poison Control Center. Although the study found that short-term symptoms such as coughing, wheezing, shortness of breath, and chest pain commonly result from inhaling the fumes, the researchers reported that long-term lung problems occurred primarily with smokers or people with asthma and other pre-existing lung diseases.

"People should pay careful attention to warning labels even when using household products," says Blanc. He noted that mixing commercial chlorine bleach products with strong acids or ammonia, both of which are contained in many other household cleansers, results in the release of toxic gases.

## Secret Service is the Best at Spotting Liars



*Taken from one of the videos which were shown to the Secret Service agents, these experimental subjects showed non-verbal clues of being liars, including (top to bottom) the furrowed brow, the "lip press" and "duping delight," or the asymmetrical smile.*

Psychologists Paul Ekman of UCSF and Maureen O'Sullivan of the University of San Francisco have found in a recent study that among several groups of experts tested—from psychiatrists to robbery investigators, judges to military polygraphers, members of the CIA and FBI to the National Security Agency, even everyday citizens—only US Secret Service agents demonstrated a special ability to catch liars.

Why? It seems that members of the Secret Service use non-verbal more than verbal clues when identifying liars, for example strained voices, eye contact avoidance, false smiles and "give-away" body language. Those who tested poorly relied mainly on the verbal clues of tone of voice and speech patterns to decide who is fibbing.

But, why do Secret Service agents use non-verbal clues more than other groups? It's a matter of speculation at this point. Among the possibilities is that Secret Service agents, who are trained to protect public officials, spend much of their time scanning crowds, looking for behavior that might be considered suspicious. In addition, the researchers say that the agents interview a lot of people who have threatened public officials. And the agents generally believe that most of the suspects are telling the truth, especially when they claim that their threats were only empty boasting. They believe that "it is only the rare individual who is lying."

## *In Brief*

### *New Center for Female Incontinence*

A new center to help the millions of women suffering from incontinence—the involuntary loss of urine—has opened at Mount Zion of UCSF. The Women's Incontinence Center, believed to be the only one of its kind in the Bay Area, focuses on finding the exact cause of the problem which will determine whether the patient is to be treated medically or surgically. "The common reason for failure of surgeries is not having the proper diagnosis in the first place," according to Jeannette Brown from the Ob/Gyn Department. "People need to realize this is a very common problem and they can get help for it. It does not have to disrupt their lives." For further information call 567-0304.

### *$500 Million to Treat Cocaine Babies*

Babies born to cocaine-using mothers have serious health problems requiring intensive care and longer hospital stays. A new study by Ciaran Phibbs, formerly of the UCSF Institute for Health Policy Studies, has found that the care given to those babies costs some $500 million a year. The intent of the study was to look at the potential cost-effectiveness of prevention and treatment programs for these mothers, thus reducing the need for newborn intensive care, says Phibbs, who now is with the VAMC in Palo Alto.

### *High-Tech Test to Predict Heart Attacks Questioned*

UCSF researchers at the VA Medical Center in San Francisco, led by anesthesiologist Dennis T. Mangano, are questioning the routine use of a high-tech test used to help predict which patients are most likely to suffer a heart attack during or after surgery. The test—called "dipyridamole thallium-201 scintigraphy"—presently is performed on some 400,000 patients at a cost of $500 million a year.

In a study of 60 people undergoing elective vascular surgery, the research team found no connection between positive results of the test and whether the patient had a heart attack or developed other heart problems after surgery.

### *New UCSF Center for STD Research*

Thanks to a grant from the National Institute of Allergy and Infectious Diseases, a new center has been established at UCSF for research into sexually transmitted diseases (STDs). It is one of four Cooperative Research Centers (CRC) to be established across the nation with total first-year funding of some $4 million.

Each CRC addresses central questions on at least three different STD organisms or syndromes. The serious complications of STDs disproportionately affect women, including infertility, ectopic (tubal) pregnancy, cervical cancer, premature delivery, miscarriage, and neonatal death. Equally important is the concern that many STDs appear to increase the transmission of HIV.

At UCSF, the CRC will be run by Julius Schachter. He and colleagues will explore ways to prevent the complications of chlamydia and human papillomavirus infections in women.

*More News for You*
*on the back page*

# What's happening

November/Decem
A bimonthly calen
events at UC San

## Special Events

Sat., Nov. 9
**UCSF Orchestra Fall Concert.** Beethoven's Third Symphony. $4/$7. Millberry Union Gym, 500 Parnassus. 8 p.m.

Wed., Nov. 13
**Cole Hall Cabaret—Joint Adventure.** Senior Theater Education Project's newest show uses music & laughter to focus on arthritis issues & proper use of medication. Cole Hall, 513 Parnassus. Noon.

Thurs., Nov. 14
**A "Grand" Celebration—Piano Benefit Concert.** UCSF musicians showcase their talent & Millberry Union's fine pianos. Proceeds go to restoration of Steinway donated by Dentistry Class of '59. $5. Millberry Union Conference Center, 500 Parnassus. 4-7 p.m.

Sun., Nov. 17
**UCSF Community Chorus Fall Concert.** Beethoven's Ninth Symphony. Tickets $8-$26. Davies Symphony Hall. 3 p.m. Call 566-8425.

Wed., Dec. 4
**Second Annual Holiday Crafts Faire.** Sponsored by UCSF Employee Activities Program. Millberry Union Conference Center, 500 Parnassus. 10 a.m.-6 p.m. Call 476-2675.

Sun., Dec. 15
**UCSF Community Chorus Festival of Carols & Christmas Sing-Along.** Tickets $8 in advance, $10 at door. First Congregational Church, Post & Mason. 3 p.m. Call 566-8425.

## AIDS Programs

Sponsored by UCSF AIDS Health Project. For more information call 476-6430.

Sat., Nov. 23
**Lesbians & HIV—Part 2.** Panel discussion. A *Living with HIV* Public Forum. Rm. 125, Mission Center Building, 1855 Folsom St. 7-9 p.m.

**Individual Risk Assessments & Referrals.** By appointment. Free.

**Positives Being Positive.** Anonymous support groups in the community for people who have tested HIV positive but have not developed symptoms of AIDS or ARC.

**Other Support Groups.** Drop-in & eight-week facilitated groups for men & women with AIDS, ARC or HIV infection, in a risk group or otherwise affected.

## Volunteer Orientation

Program to acquaint new & prospective volunteers with opportunities available in the Medical Center at UCSF. Held in Langley Porter Psychiatric Institute Auditorium, 401 Parnassus, on the Tuesdays listed below. For further information call 476-1196.

Nov. 5, 9-11 a.m.
Nov. 19, 5:30-7:30 p.m.

## Brown Bag Lectures

A series of free lectures held weekly on Wednesdays at the Parnassus campus (P), Rm. 300, Health Sciences West, enter through 513 Parnassus; twice a month on Thursdays in Rm. 125, UCSF-Mission Center Building (MCB), 1855 Folsom St.; monthly on Tuesdays in Herbst Hall, Mount Zion Medical Center of UCSF (MZ), 1600 Divisadero; and monthly on Mondays in the Cafeteria, UCSF-Laurel Heights (LH). All lectures held at noon, except the LH lectures, which are at 12:30 p.m. For further information call 476-4394.

Nov. 4
**Generic Drugs.** (LH)

Nov. 6
**Memory?** How can we tell if our poor memory is due to Alzheimer's Disease, stress, depression or natural aging?(P)

Nov. 7
**Your Financial Guidelines for the 1990s.** (MCB)

Nov. 12
**The Stressed Health-Care Provider.** (MZ)

Nov. 13
**The Mouth Is More Than Teeth.** (P)

Nov. 20
**How to Work with Difficult People.** (P)

Nov. 21
**Do We Still Need to Worry about Tooth Decay?** (MCB)

Nov. 27
**Pediatric Obesity.** (P)

Dec. 2
**Society of Six.** French Impressionist painting in California—in the 1920s?(LH)

Dec. 3
**The Biology of Aging.** (MZ)

Dec. 4
**Home Care.** How to evaluate home care quality as a consumer.(P)

Dec. 5
**Holiday Blues.** (MCB)

Dec. 11
**New Year, New You: Keeping New Year's Resolutions.** (P)

## Institute of Healing Arts & Sciences

All talks are free and held on Fridays at noon in Rm. 721, Nursing Bldg., enter through 521 Parnassus. Call Marie Lehrer at 476-3939 for details.

Nov. 1
**Natural Medicine: Curing with Air, Water, Sun, Soil.**

Nov. 8
**Hanna Somatic Education.** A method of pain eradication & life-long physical improvement.

Nov. 15
**Diet & the Immune System.**

Nov. 22
**Choosing Lovers: The Psychodynamic of the Romantic Relationship.**

**Multiple Helpers Outreach Network Support Group.** For victims & survivors of violent trauma. Ages 18 & over. Meets on Tuesdays from 10 a.m.-noon and on Wednesdays from 1-3 p.m. in Rm. A222, Langley Porter Psychiatric Institute, 401 Parnassus; and from 7-10 p.m. in Rm. 517, Nursing Bldg., enter through 521 Parnassus. For further information call the helpline at 759-7923, 7 a.m.-10 p.m. daily.

## Recreation & Fitness

Millberry Union Fitness Center offers a great variety of classes & workshops including Step Aerobics, Self-Hypnosis, Jazz Dance, Tennis, Pre- & Post-Natal Exercise & more. Millberry Union, 500 Parnassus.For more information and a free brochure call 476-1115.

## Community Health Talks

A series of free lecture/discussions sponsored by Public Service Outreach Programs. Held at UCSF Laurel Heights (LH), 3333 California St., or the Parnassus campus (P) in Toland Hall, 533 Parnassus. 7-8:30 p.m. Free parking available. Call 476-8429 for details.

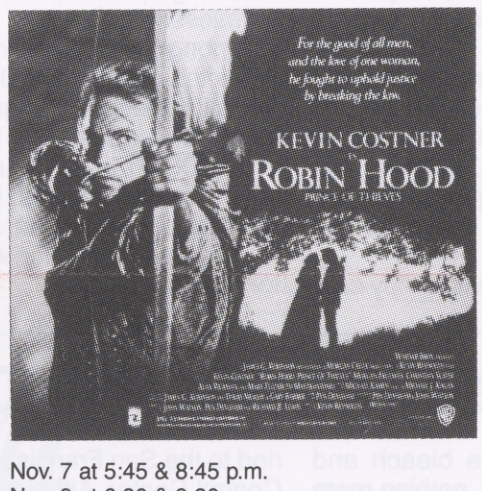
Nov. 7
**Art for Recovery: Exploring the Creative Mind.** (P)

Nov. 21
**Moles, Melanoma & Sunlight.** (LH)

Dec. 5
**Understanding Your Hearing Loss: What New Technologies Mean for You.** (P)

## Cole Hall Cinema

Films are shown on Thursdays and Fridays in Cole Hall, 513 Parnassus. Children under 14 $2; UCSF students & Millberry Union members, $2.50; other students & seniors, $3; general $3.50. Movies subject to change. Call 476-2542.


For the good of all men,
and the love of one woman,
he fought to uphold justice
by breaking the law.
KEVIN COSTNER
ROBIN HOOD
PRINCE OF THIEVES

Nov. 7 at 5:45 & 8:45 p.m.
Nov. 8 at 6:30 & 9:30 p.m.
**Robin Hood, Prince of Thieves.**

Nov. 14 at 5:45 & 8:45 p.m.
Nov. 15 at 6:30 & 9:30 p.m.
**Jungle Fever.**

Nov. 21 at 5:45 & 8:45 p.m.
Nov. 22 at 6:30 & 9:30 p.m.
**Terminator II.**

## Great Expectations Programs for Parents

The UCSF Birth Center offers the following lectures on Wednesdays for new & prospective parents. $5 per individual or couple. Rm. 326, Ambulatory Care Center, 400 Parnassus. Call 476-MOMS for registration & information.

Nov. 6
**Bargain Hunting for Baby.**

Nov. 13
**The Growing Child: Spending Quality Time with Infants & Young Children.**

## Outdoors Unlimited

Outdoors Unlimited is a cooperative resource center for outdoor recreation and adventure, serving both the UCSF campus and the general public. It provides skills training, equipment rentals, trip planning information and a place to meet others with similar interests. To receive a quarterly listing of Outdoors Unlimited trips and clinics, call 476-2078.

## Breast Cancer Screening

Women can have low-cost mammograms—X-rays to screen for breast cancer—from a mobile van that travels to convenient Bay Area locations. The procedure takes approximately 20 minutes and costs $50. Your physician's approval is required, plus his/her full name, address & telephone number to ensure results are mailed promptly. For appointments call 476-2193 between 9 a.m. and 3:30 p.m. A $50 mammography screening also is available at the Mount Zion Hospital of UCSF Radiology Department. Call 885-7710.

Nov. 1
**UCSF.** On Parnassus at Medical Center Way.

Nov. 4-6
**Foothill College/Los Altos Hills.** 12345 El Monte Rd. Call Diane Glaser at 949-7243 for appointment.

Nov. 7
**Middlefield College/Palo Alto.** 400 Middlefield Rd. Call Diane Glaser at 949-7243 for appointment.

Nov. 8
**Palo Alto Senior Center.** 450 Bryant St. Call Ellen Dietrick at 327-2811 for appointment.

Nov. 18-21
**Marina Green.** In parking lot near Goodwill shed & Fort Mason.

Nov. 22
**Chinatown.** 1490 Mason St. at District Health Center 4.

Nov. 25-27
**Taraval.** On Taraval St. between 17th & 18th Aves.

Dec. 2-5
**Pier 1 Imports.** Colma, 101 Colma Blvd.

Dec. 6
**UCSF.** On Parnassus at Medical Center Way.

Dec. 16-20
**Embarcadero.** On Drumm St. between Sacramento & Clay.

Dec. 26-27
**Diamond Heights.** On Diamond Heights Blvd. near Safeway.

Dec. 30-31
Jan. 2-3
**Sunset District.** On Irving St. between 25th & 26th Aves.

## Campus Tours

All tours are free and take place at 1 p.m. on Tuesdays, Nov. 5, 12, 19, 26 and Dec. 3, 10, 17. Meet in the lobby of Medical Sciences, 513 Parnassus. For further information call 476-4394.

## Look Good, Feel Better

This program provides expert advice on makeup, wigs & the use of turbans to people who have undergone chemotherapy and have lost or are losing their hair. Held the first Monday of each month in the 11 Long Solarium, Long Hospital, 505 Parnassus. Call 476-1383.

## Cancer Referral Hotline

The UCSF Cancer Referral Service enables cancer patients to place just one telephone call and learn the names of UCSF doctors specializing in the kind of treatment they need. Call 1-800-888-8664.

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## Senior Health Education Program

Free lectures by UCSF staff geared to senior citizens. Call 476-4394 for complete schedule and to confirm events.

Thurs., Nov. 7
**Beating the Holiday Blues.** Richmond District YMCA, 360 18th St. 10:30 a.m.

Mon., Nov. 11
**Peripheral Artery Disease.** San Francisco Senior Center-Downtown, 481 0'Farrell. 1 p.m.

Tues., Nov. 12
**Skin Care.** North Beach Senior Center, 666 Filbert St. 1 p.m.

Wed., Nov. 13
**Dermatitis.** St. Francis Senior Center, 152 Church St. 11 a.m.

Fri., Nov. 15
**Hearing Loss & New Hearing Aids.** St. Mark's Lutheran Church Senior Center, 1101 O'Farrell St. 10:45 a.m.

Tues., Nov. 19
**Beating the Holiday Blues.** First Baptist Senior Adults, 21 Octavia St. 1 p.m.

Wed., Nov. 20
**Eye Care/Cataract Surgery.** Lincoln Park Senior Center, 417 31st Ave. 12:30 p.m.

Wed., Dec. 18
**Over the Counter Drugs.** Bayview Senior Center, 1706 Yosemite Ave. 11 a.m.

## Women's Programs

Unless otherwise noted, events are sponsored by UCSF Women's Resource Center. For recorded program information call 476-0400. To pre-register for workshops call 476-5836.

Mon., Nov. 4
**Women in Science as Subject & Object.** Co-sponsored by UCSF Women in Life Sciences. Rm. 721, Nursing Building, enter through 521 Parnassus. Noon-1 p.m.

Tues., Nov. 5
**Film/Discussion: Emiko Omori & *Hot Summer Winds.*** Rm. 300, Health Sciences West, enter through 513 Parnassus. Noon-1 p.m.

Tues., Nov. 12
**Financial Planning for an Independent Lifestyle.** Rm. 417, Clinical Sciences, 521 Parnassus. Noon-1:30 p.m.

Thurs., Nov. 14
**Marketing Your Ideas with Integrity.** Co-sponsored by UCSF Associated Business Officers Group. Toland Hall, 521 Parnassus. Noon-1:30 p.m.

Sat., Nov. 16
**Toy Making Workshop.** Learn to use hand & power tools to create toys, puzzles & games. Great for holiday gifts. $35-$55. Rm. 517, Nursing Building, enter through 521 Parnassus. 10 a.m.-4 p.m.

Thurs., Nov. 21
**Knowing Herself: Women in Psychotherapy.** Bringing a fresh understanding to female strengths in a traditionally male-oriented culture. Toland Hall, 521 Parnassus. Noon-1:30 p.m.

UCSF

*University of California, San Francisco*
*News and Public Information Services*
*513 Parnassus Avenue*
*San Francisco, CA 94143-0462*

*How can you give orders or arrest someone without your voice?*

# A harsh reality.

David Fortune faced losing his career unless he regained his ability to speak.

David was a patrol sergeant on the Monterey police force. Cancer had necessitated the removal of his larynx. But David needed his voice for his job. How can you give orders or arrest someone without your voice?

The conventional options looked disappointing. An electronic voice box required David to cover the opening in his throat—the result of his laryngectomy—with his hand. But a police officer needs his hands as well as his voice. He tried to master esophageal speech but failed. It was understandable. Only a third of patients who undergo laryngectomies learn to produce sound with a tube meant for swallowing food and liquid.

David, then 35, took a desk job at the station. But he considered this alternative unsatisfactory. Had the desk job remained permanent, he says, "I would have been dead in the water. I would have had to leave police work."

Fortunately, however, an ear, nose and throat specialist in Monterey told David about a then relatively new device that allows hands-free speech.

The device is actually two devices, together known as the "Blom-Singer Voice Restoration System," named after its inventors, speech pathologist Eric Blom and Mark Singer, currently chief of otolaryngology and head and neck surgery at Mount Zion Hospital of UCSF.

The first device is a silicone tube about one inch long and four millimeters in diameter. The tube is inserted where the larynx used to be. It connects the trachea, or windpipe, to where the esophagus and pharynx, or throat cavity, meet.

Normally, the vocal chords produce sound by vibrating when air rushes past them. With the Blom-Singer prosthesis, air flows through the tube and into the pharynx, vibrating the pharynx instead.

A small valve opens during exhalation to let out air, but otherwise remains closed to keep food and liquid from entering the trachea. This valve serves the same function as the epiglottis, which also is removed as part of a laryngectomy.

The second device is a valve made of plastic and rubber. It fits over the opening in the throat (people with laryngectomies breathe through that opening). It is called a tracheostoma valve, and is about the size of a half-dollar. Like the prosthesis valve, the tracheostoma valve also works one-way, except it remains open during inhalation and closes during exhalation.

The two valves work in concert. When the patient exhales to speak, the prosthesis valve remains open while the tracheostoma valve closes. In this way a patient can speak without using his hands. In addition, the patient's voice sounds more natural. It sounds raspy, rather than the electronic, robotic sound that a voice box makes.

Singer fitted David with a Blom-Singer system in 1984. Speaking with the system right away was no easy task. David worked with a speech therapist for six weeks. He learned how to adjust his muscles and his breathing to the new devices. "I had to learn how to talk all over again," he says.

Since then, David has become quite a talker. He maintains a heavy public speaking schedule. He addresses health care groups on voice recovery and police groups on law enforcement. He also occasionally appears on television news programs to talk about cases he's working on.

David's career also has taken off. He earned a promotion to lieutenant four years ago. And now he serves as head of the investigations department.

To add to his achievements, David recently completed a special master's program for law enforcement executives. He was one of 22 people selected for the program from among hundreds of candidates statewide. This despite one admissions judge rejecting him because of his voice.

Predictably, David's voice proved no drawback. He excelled at communicating. "My classmates voted me 'Most Inspirational Student'," he says. "I was very proud."

—Marshall Krantz

David Powers

November/December 1991

# To Our Neighbors

New Gamma Knife Allows Bloodless Brain Surgery

The Secret Service the Best at Spotting Liars

Inhaling Cleansers Sends Thousands to Poison Centers

UCSF
University of California, San Francisco
513 Parnassus Avenue, San Francisco, CA 94143-0462

# More News for You

San Francisco Chronicle

*UCSF patient Mariel Bordon, masked against germs, practiced outside of her grandmother's home to compete in the soapbox derby.*

## Meet Mariel, the Soapbox Queen

Her name is Mariel Bordon. Maybe you read about her in the *San Francisco Chronicle*. She's a Daly City fourth-grader with leukemia whose dream it was to enter the Northern California Soapbox Derby. So sure she was that she could compete, she gathered sponsors among her nurses and doctors at UCSF while she was hospitalized for chemotherapy.

With her newly found funds, Mariel and her father built her a competition vehicle, "called a 'soapbox' because it looks like one," and then painted it gold "because this is the Golden State." She gave it a name—Mariel—after herself, she explains, and then practiced on a slope by her grandmother's house.

As late as the day before the derby, Mariel had to come in for platelets, and her doctor advised her against participating. But, there was no daunting this eight-year-old. She competed with the best of them at the race in Elk Grove, a small town near Sacramento, and placed 10th. She also got an award for being "most courageous." She's really happy, she says, because best of all she had a lot of fun.

## Barriers to Medical Care for Uninsured

Go into practically any public hospital emergency room in this country and you'll find it overcrowded. Because of the long waits to see a doctor, many of the patients leave the hospital without care. According to a UCSF study, the long waits are caused by the lack of clinics and primary care for the poor and uninsured who have little choice but to go to a public hospital ER when they need medical care.

In a study of 700 patients at the SFGH emergency department during a week last summer, 15% left before seeing a physician. Similar studies have found this problem of overcrowding in public hospital ERs across the U.S.

"Although many patients who left without being seen did well, the health of some patients may have been jeopardized by the barrier of long queues for emergency care," says study leader Andrew Bindman of the UCSF Institute for Health Policy Studies.

In yet another study, UCSF's Robert A. Lowe of Emergency Medicine found that the increasing number of uninsured and under-insured Americans has strained our health delivery system to a point that the quality of care for everyone has been compromised.

As more people seek ongoing medical care at public hospitals instead of with a single health care provider, many of the hospitals are forced to limit access to care because of the expense, says Lowe. And when trauma centers lose money because of treating uninsured patients, hospitals withdraw from the trauma system, forcing all patients—insured or not—to travel farther for care.

Lowe headed the study for the Governmental Affairs Committee of the Society for Academic Emergency Medicine, which he chairs.